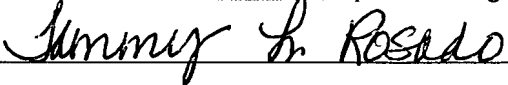


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## METHODS AND APPARATUS TO DISTRIBUTE POLICY INFORMATION

### 15 BACKGROUND

Virtual Private Networks (i.e., VPNs) provide a secured means for transmitting and receiving data between network nodes even though a corresponding physical network supporting propagation of the data is shared by many users. Typically, the data transmitted between such network nodes (e.g., edge nodes of a service provider network) is encrypted to protect against eavesdropping and tampering by unauthorized parties. Because the physical network is shared, costs of using resources are generally reduced for each of many users.

A physical network such as a service provider network topology may include peripherally located provider edge routers, each of which couples to one or multiple customer edge routers. The customer edge routers, in turn, may couple to private local area networks associated with one or multiple customers. Typically, the service provider

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